

IV. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 7. (Canceled)

8. (New) An expansion valve assembly, comprising:

an expansion valve cassette unit;

a housing having a housing refrigerant path extending along a longitudinal direction and an expansion valve cassette unit hole in fluid communication with and extending transversely to the refrigerant path and sized for accommodating the expansion valve cassette unit via a seal member, the housing refrigerant path including a refrigerant entrance hole and a refrigerant exit hole formed into a common side surface of the housing with the refrigerant entrance hole and the refrigerant exit hole extending parallel to one another; and

a generally flat flange having a refrigerant entrance path defined by a first pipe section and a refrigerant exit path defined by a second pipe section, the first and second pipe sections projecting from a common flat surface of the flange and extending parallel to one another, the refrigerant entrance hole sized and adapted to receive the first pipe section in a sealed manner and the refrigerant exit hole sized and adapted to receive the second pipe section in a sealed manner, the flange connected to the housing with the flat surface of the flange and the common side surface of the housing being in face-to-face contact with each other.

9. (New) An expansion valve assembly according to claim 8, further comprising a bolt wherein the flange is connected to the housing by the bolt extending into and through the flange and into the common side surface of the housing.

10. (New) An expansion valve assembly according to claim 8, further comprising a first seal ring in contact with and surrounding the first pipe member and a second seal ring in contact with and surrounding the second pipe member, the first and second seal rings being disposed in the respective refrigerant entrance hole and refrigerant exit hole when the flange is connected to the housing.